

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) An exhaust emission control device comprising:
an inner shell arranged fixedly in a muffler incorporated in an exhaust pipe;
a particulate filter integrally carried by a cartridge shell and unitized into a filter cartridge which is fitted through insertion into said inner shell;
wherein the inner shell is formed to have an inner diameter greater than an outer diameter of the cartridge shell to provide an insertion clearance, and said inner shell is formed with a tapered portion at a position short of an inward end thereof by a predetermined distance;
wherein said tapered portion has a gradually reduced diameter in a direction of insertion of the filter cartridge, with a portion of the inner shell inward of said tapered portion being formed as a small-diameter portion with a reduced insertion clearance, and wherein said small-diameter portion is at a greater depth than said tapered portion with respect to said insertion direction; and
sealing and cushioning materials fitted over an outer peripheral surface on the inward end of the cartridge shell and which are held in a clamped manner between the filter cartridge and the small-diameter portion of said inner shell upon fitting of the filter cartridge.
2. (Previously Presented) The exhaust emission control device as claimed in claim 1, wherein a first stopper is arranged on the outer peripheral surface of the cartridge shell at a position short of the inward end thereof by a predetermined distance, and a second stopper is provided in said inner shell such that the sealing and the cushioning materials are held in a clamped manner between the first and second stoppers upon fixing of the filter cartridge,

wherein said second stopper is separate from said tapered portion, and wherein said second stopper is positioned inward of said tapered portion with respect to the insertion direction so as to be at a greater depth than said tapered portion.

3. (Previously Presented) The exhaust emission control device as claimed in claim 1, wherein a mat material made of heat-resistant fabric is fitted as the sealing material over the outer peripheral surface on the inward end of the cartridge shell, and a net material made of metal wire is fitted as the cushioning material peripherally on the cartridge shell at positions outward and inward of said sealing material, and wherein the cushioning material fitted inward is extruded inward out of the cartridge shell by a predetermined distance.

4. (Previously Presented) The exhaust emission control device as claimed in claim 2, wherein a mat material made of heat-resistant fabric is fitted as the sealing material over the outer peripheral surface on the inward end of the cartridge shell, and a net material made of metal wire is fitted as the cushioning material peripherally on the cartridge shell at positions outward and inward of said sealing material, and wherein the cushioning material fitted inward is extruded inward out of the cartridge shell by a predetermined distance.

5. (Currently Amended) The exhaust emission control device as claimed in claim 2 ~~claim 3~~, wherein the second stopper is in the form of a tapered ring gradually reduced in diameter toward the cartridge shell and has a maximum diameter slightly greater than the outer diameter of the cartridge shell.

6. (Previously Presented) The exhaust emission control device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the second stopper is in the form of a tapered ring gradually reduced in diameter toward the cartridge shell and has a maximum diameter slightly greater than the outer diameter of the cartridge shell.

7. (Previously Presented) The exhaust emission control device as claimed in claim 1, further including a stopper ring separate from said inner shell, wherein said stopper ring is radially inside of said small-diameter portion of said inner shell, and wherein said stopper ring is spaced inwardly from said tapered portion with respect to the insertion direction so as to be at a depth greater than said tapered portion.